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HAAS



Ninth-Place Result for Custer at Phoenix

Ford Driver Earns First Top-10 Finish of Cup Career

Date: March 8, 2020
Event: FanShield 500k
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Phoenix Raceway (1.022-mile oval)
Format: 312 laps, broken into three stages (75 laps/115 laps/122 laps)
Start/Finish: 16th/9th (Running, completed 316 of 316 laps)
Point Standing: 22nd with 73 points, 91 out of first
Note: Race extended four laps past its scheduled 312-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.

Race Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 2 Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-75):

- Cole Custer started 16th and ended the stage 12th.
- On lap 10, as he ran 15th, Custer reported his Haas Automation Mustang was tight.
- During the first caution on lap 59, the California native reported his Mustang remained tight. He pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments, then restarted 16th.
- After a brief green flag, the caution was displayed again on lap 65. The 22-year-old stayed out on the track in the 12th position, where he ended the stage.
- He pitted during the Stage 1 break for fuel, four tires and more adjustments to help with his Ford's handling and returned to the track 20th after varying pit strategies.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 76-190):

- Custer started 20th in Stage 2 and completed it in 10th to earn one stage point.
- On lap 92 Custer, running 18th, reported once again that his Mustang was too tight.
- The Haas Automation driver was back in the top-15 on lap 126.
- Under caution on lap 132, Custer pitted from 14th for fuel and four tires, then restarted 15th. Crew chief Mike Shiplett relayed to Custer that his Mustang was really good on the long run.
- The No. 41 driver reached the top-10 on lap 158.
- Custer came down pit road during the Stage 2 break for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help his Mustang turn in the center better.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 191-316):

- Custer began the final stage from 13th and ended the race ninth.
- Under caution on lap 215 the Ford driver pitted from 17th for fuel and four tires. He restarted 16th.
- With 60 laps to go and under another caution, Custer pitted from 15th and restarted 18th.
- With 47 laps to go, the caution was once again displayed. Shiplett made the call for Custer to stay out and restart sixth.
- With another quick caution on lap 277, Custer pitted from 13th for four fresh tires and an adjustment.
- He restarted 17th with 30 laps to go, and the caution came back out just after the green flag with Custer in the 14th spot.
- The rookie driver was in the 12th spot on lap 291.
- On the lap-304 caution, Custer was in the 13th spot and didn't pit, which allowed him to restart ninth.
- On the green-white-checked attempt, the SHR driver was in the 10th position and ultimately finished ninth.

Notes:

- Custer's ninth-place finish was his best in seven career NASCAR Cup Series starts.
- This was Custer's first top-10 of the season, and it came in his first career NASCAR Cup Series start at Phoenix.
- This is Custer's third straight top-20. He finished 18th in the series' last race at Auto Club Speedway.
- Custer was the highest-finishing NASCAR Cup Series rookie in the FanShield 500k.
- Joey Logano won the FanShield 500k to score his milestone 25th career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his second of the season and his second at Phoenix. His margin of victory over second-place Kevin Harvick was .276 of a second.

- This was Ford's 17th NASCAR Cup Series victory at Phoenix.
- There were 12 caution periods for a total of 73 laps.
- Twenty-seven of the 38 drivers in the FanShield 500k finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick leaves Phoenix as the championship leader with a one-point advantage over second-place Logano.

Cole Custer, driver of the No. 41 Haas Automation Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

“This was a huge finish for us. It is a huge boost to have a really solid day and a fast Mustang. We overcame obstacles all weekend, and hopefully we can continue to carry that all through the year. I think we get better every single race, so it is just a matter of continuing that.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Folds of Honor 500 on Sunday, March 15, at Atlanta Motor Speedway. The race starts at 2 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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